MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 October 1965

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12/7/65 mg

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

I. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

The second session of the regular monthly meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts was held in the office of the Interior Department Building on 20 October 1965, at 9:30 a.m., with Chairman William Walton presiding.

Present were: William Walton
Burnham Kelly
Hideo Sasaki
John Carl Warnecke

Staff: C.H. Atherton, Secretary
Myra Younker, Editor

NCPC: Arnall Connell

Recorder: Leone M. Vialpando

II. INTERVIEWS

1. Department of the Navy

a. Chemical Laboratory Building, Naval Research Laboratory - Proposed Design

Captain Enger, Captain Bartlett, and Lt. Kirkwood of the Department of the Navy, and Mr. Hayes of Hayes, Seay, Mattern and Mattern, architectural firm, attended the meeting during the discussion of this project.

Mr. Hayes explained that the design was completely revised along the lines of the Commission's criticism at the September meeting. The building was greatly simplified with all elements of the facade expressing a definite functional aspect of the building. The exterior material would be gray exposed aggregate concrete panels applied over a poured-in-place structural frame, dark bronze trim, and gray-tinted glass.

Chairman Walton commended the architect on the improvement of the design. The Commission approved the project with the request for submission of details as developed.

The Secretary prepared a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Department of the Navy stating the Commission's action. EXHIBIT A

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The Secretary prepared a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Department of the Navy stating the Commission's action. EXHIBIT A

b. Bolling/Anacostia Dining Hall and Squadron Headquarters Building - Material Samples

Captain Enger, Captain Bartlett, and Lt. Kirkwood, Department of the Navy, and Mr. Vincent G. Kling, architect, attended the meeting during the discussion of this project.

Roof materials and the fenestration were the major problems discussed. Basically approving the design in general the members had doubts about the possible reflecting sheen of the roof. Mr. Kling commented that this was only the initial appearance and soon weathers to a dull finish.

The overall well planned area with interestingly designed buildings and sites caused the members to question the fenestration of the administration building which had the appearance of a barracks and was out of character with the rest of the design.

The members approved the materials and requested that the fenestration be further studied.

The Secretary prepared a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Department of the Navy expressing the members' views. EXHIBIT B

2. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Fort Myer, Virginia, NCO Open Mess - Revised Design

Col. F.B. Proctor and Mr. Weber, Corps of Engineers, and Mr. Elkan W. Groll, architect , attended the meeting during the discussion of this project.

Mr. Groll explained in detail the site plans and design of the building. Basic materials were precast concrete with exposed aggregate for structural columns, fascias, and floor slab while the remainder of the building would be in brick.

Mr. Kelly began the discussion stating that the site and site plan did not have the feeling or character of a recreational center. The plan was too tightly organized, a feature which resulted in large, dark, and wide louvers and generally unpleasant interior spaces. In addition the elements of the building which should relate to various activities were not always in the best place.

Mr. Sasaki commented that the ballroom and dining room should open out into an area which could be developed as the heart of the outdoor recreational focus. While essentially a simple exterior design, the interior plans were complicated.

Mr. Warnecke remarked that the plan appeared a completely closed box which should be opened up and relate all activities (social and recreational)

b. Bolling/Anacostia Dining Hall and Squadron Headquarters
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2. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Fort Myer, Virginia, NCO Open Mess - Revised Design

Col. E.B. Proctor and Mr. Weber, Corps of Engineers, and Mr. Elkan W. Orell, architect, attended the meeting during the discussion of this project.

Mr. Orell explained in detail the site plans and design of the building. Basic materials were precast concrete with exposed aggregate for structural columns, fascias, and floor slab while the remainder of the building would be in brick.

Mr. Kelly began the discussion stating that the site and site plan did not have the feeling or character of a recreational center. The plan was too tightly organized, a feature which resulted in large, dark, and wide louvers and generally unpleasant interior spaces. In addition the elements of the building which should relate to various activities were not always in the best place.

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into a well designed landscape area for relaxing. The plan should be restudied and the required wall separating the building from the pool should be designed to permit a view of the pool rather than hinder the view.

Chairman Walton concluded the discussion stating that the floor plan was unsatisfactory and should be restudied with the members' comments used as a guide to a better design.

The Secretary prepared a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army, stating the members disapproval. EXHIBIT C

3. Smithsonian Institution

National Zoological Park, Hospital and Research Building - Service Area - Revised Design

Dr. Theodore Reed, Director, and Mr. Alan Jacobs, architect of the National Zoological Park, attended the meeting during the discussion of these projects. Having studied the revised design during the previous session, Chairman Walton requested Mr. Sasaki to discuss the members' views.

Acknowledging the architect's attempt to incorporate the Commission's criticism of the previous design for the Hospital and Research Building, Mr. Sasaki commented that a more disciplined relationship between the site and design had been recommended rather than the present arbitrary relationship which appeared to be a forced picturesque. The members felt the plan created difficulty and should be tightened in the same manner as the previous submission. The design of the building should be unified and become a single mass with one simple line roof. He suggested that the windows appear as slits or be eliminated giving a sense of solidity to the design.

Commenting on the buildings in the service area Mr. Sasaki stated that the general site plan was improved but that the shelter building should be realligned and given the same orientation as the other buildings. To screen the buildings, Mr. Sasaki suggested that pine trees be planted along the banks of Rock Creek.

The Secretary prepared a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Director, National Zoological Park, expressing the members' views. EXHIBIT D

4. District of Columbia Government, Department of Buildings and Grounds

Mr. G. A. Purcell, Department of Buildings and Grounds, and the architects attended the meeting during the discussion, by various members

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Chairman Watton concluded the discussion stating that the floor plan was unsatisfactory and should be restudied with the members' comments used as a guide to a better design.

The Secretary prepared a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army, stating the members disapproval.
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4. District of Columbia Government, Department of Buildings and Grounds

Mr. G. A. Purcell, Department of Buildings and Grounds, and the architects attended the meeting during the discussion, by various members

requested by Chairman Walton, of the following projects.

a. Engine Co. No. 15, 14th and V Sts., S.E. - Proposed Design

Mr. Warnecke explained that the site and floor plan which appeared direct and functional, were satisfactory but that the design for this brick building, developed by Mr. Clark Harmon, architect, contained a disparity of architectural style. The exaggerated hipped roof and tower seemed artificial and contrived and totally out of context with the rest of the building.

Mr. Sasaki continued by stating that the Department of Buildings and Grounds should strive for the best prototype design for a fire house. This prototype could then be adapted to individual sites as the occasion arose, with further refinements and adjustments to the architectural expression where appropriate.

b. Elementary School, 11th and Kenyon Streets, N.W.-Proposed Design

Mr. Warnecke reported the Commission's approval of the site plan and design for this project developed by Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolf, architects and engineers. He remarked that the complete use of the site provided for an appropriate set-back, parking areas, and gave a maximum recreational area. The architects had shown a sensitivity to this particular neighborhood and to the city. The simple solution to the site, the directness of entrance, internal relationship of various elements resulted in an outstanding design for a school.

12/7/65 mg

c. Elementary School, Texas Avenue and ~~Burbank~~ Burns St., S.E.-Proposed Design

Remarking on the difficult site plan, Mr. Sasaki commented that it should benefit from the adjacent park and not have a scheme which appeared jammed in with play spaces provided underneath the building. The general solution appeared arbitrary and not well studied. The protuberance of the kindergarten element was unnecessary.

Mr. Kelly continued the discussion, stressing the need for more adequate school sites in the Nation's Capital which should have the best sites of any major city and have sufficient recreation space around them.

Recognizing the difficult site, Mr. Warnecke suggested that if the school were located on the ridge with a view of the Potomac and a park across the street, the plan might be improved. Although the site was difficult, the architecture of the school should be considered the more important phase of the plan and designed to improve the site. The solution was inadequate and should be restudied by the architects.

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c. Elementary School, Texas Avenue and Benning St., S.E.-Proposed Design

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d. Emery Elementary School Replacement, Lincoln Road and S Street, N.W. - Proposed Design

After Mr. Kelly again stressed the need for adequate school sites, Mr. Sasaki continued the discussion by stating that the design indicated a style of architecture comparable to that of the 1930's. If any play areas under sections of a building were justified, it would be on this site rather than on the previous project, yet none was attempted and such space was needed. Mr. Warnecke repeated his previous statement that when the site is inadequate it becomes imperative that the design be excellent. A restudy of the project by Ronald S. Senseman, architect, was required.

e. Woodson Senior High School, 55th and Eads St., N.W. - Informal Discussion

Chairman Walton commented on the Commission's approval of the concept of the high-rise design for this high school by McLeod, Ferrara, and Ensigns, architects. He suggested that instead of a cluster of elements around an 8 story tower, maybe the design should be restudied as two units with the tower cleanly expressed by itself and the one floor element designed as two floor structures. The solid side of the tower would be toward the power line.

The Secretary prepared a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Department of Buildings and Grounds expressing the members' approval or disapproval of these projects as specified above. EXHIBITS E - I

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

C. H. Atherton
Secretary

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

WILLIAM WALTON, Chairman
GORDON BUNSHAFT ALINE B. SAARINEN
BURNHAM KELLY HIDEO SASAKI
THEODORE ROSZAK JOHN CARL WARNECKE
CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON

1 November 1965

Dear Captain Bartlett:

At its meeting on October 20th the Commission of Fine Arts considered the revised designs for the Chemistry Laboratory Building at the Naval Research Center.

The Commission felt that the revised design was considerably improved over the initial submission and approved the plans as presented. It was not clear, however, exactly how the structural system and its expression would carry through in detail in the facades. We would therefore like to see further studies as they progress, in order to insure that the architectural treatment is developed in a consistent manner.

Our next meeting is scheduled for November 16 and 17.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Captain J. V. Bartlett
U.S. Navy
Area Public Works Officer
Building 57, U.S. Naval Station
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

WILLIAM WALTON, Chairman
GORDON BUNSHAFT — ALINE B. SAARINEN
BURNHAM KELLY — HIDEO SASAKI
THEODORE ROSZAK — JOHN CARL WARNECKE
CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

1 November 1965

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON

Dear Captain Bartlett:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on October 20, approved the materials submitted by the architects for the new dining hall and squadron headquarters building at Anacostia/ Bolling.

The Commission still had some reservations about details of the latter building, especially the scale of the facades which appeared to have been weakened by the changes in fenestration. The earlier scheme seemed to work better and also was more in character with the office functions of the building. This probably should be emphasized.

The revised entranceway was also questioned. The Commission felt that some of the quality of the previous design was lost by eliminating the interruption to the roofline at this point. We suggest this detail be given some additional study.

All other aspects of the presentation were acceptable, and we look forward to continuing the project review as work progresses.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Captain J. V. Bartlett
U.S. Navy
Area Public Works Officer
Bldg. 57, U.S. Naval Station

EXHIBIT B

2 November 1965

Dear Colonel Proctor:

At its meeting on October 20th, the Commission considered preliminary designs for the NCO open mess at Fort Myer, Virginia.

The Commission considered that the design was not only unsuitable in its over all architectural treatment but that the plan would result in unpleasant interior spaces as well as an unsatisfactory exterior arrangement on the site.

We made a number of suggestions to the architect. These included rearranging the building masses around an enclosed interior courtyard that would contain both outdoor eating areas and the swimming pool. The walls facing this interior courtyard could be opened up and arranged in such a manner as to give a much better view of the formal activities contained in the court. The exterior elevations could then become nothing more than a simple garden wall with openings toward views where appropriate. The architects have agreed to study these recommendations and we will be glad to review the results as soon as they are ready.

Our next meeting is scheduled for November 16 and 17.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Lt Col F. B. Proctor
District Engineer
U.S. Army Engineer District, Norfolk
Foot of Front Street
Norfolk, Virginia

EXHIBIT C

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

WILLIAM WALTON, Chairman
GORDON BUNSHAFT — ALINE B. SAARINEN
BURNHAM KELLY — HIDEO SASAKI
THEODORE ROSZAK — JOHN CARL WARNECKE
CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

1 November 1965

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON

Dear Doctor Reed:

This will confirm recommendations of the Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting on October 20th regarding the new studies of the hospital and research building and also the service area. We feel that the architectural treatment proposed both for the research area and the service area are substantially improved. On the other hand, the Commission feels that the changes in the plan, particularly of the hospital and research area resulted in a lack of unity and was unnecessarily confused. By reverting to the original plan and retaining the newer schemes for the architectural treatment we feel that both projects could be approved.

We would like to see the results of the new studies for the hospital and research building but do not feel it is necessary to have any further submissions of the service area.

The next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts is scheduled for November 16 and 17.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Doctor Theodore H. Reed
Director
National Zoological Park
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

2 November 1965

Dear General Duke:

At its meeting on October 20th the Commission of Fine Arts considered the preliminary design for a new fire engine house at 14th and V Streets, S.E. The Commission felt that the excessively large hipped roof on the building was ungainly and resulted in a character that, to our way of thinking, is completely unsuitable for a fire house. The design should obviously be simplified and rendered in a more straight forward expression of function.

We discussed the whole matter of using a prototype plan for future fire houses. The plan is basically good. The difficulty, however, lies in the desire of architects to give some individual expression as each new fire house comes along. It might be better if a single design were refined to the point that it could be used wherever the need for a new firehouse arose. As this might present some problems in regard to present procedures, and also in relation to possible objections from the architectural profession, we would be interested to get your reactions to the idea.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Brigadier General C. M. Duke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington, D.C. 20004

EXHIBIT E

2 November 1965

Dear General Duke:

At its meeting on October 20th, the Commission considered the preliminary designs for a new elementary school at 11th and Kenyon Streets, N.W.

The Commission was happily surprised at the outstanding quality of this design. The project in all its aspects was by far the best the Commission has reviewed for some time.

The plan arrangement, with its interior courtyard preserving existing trees, the organization of spaces around the building, its relation to the neighborhood, and the proposed treatment of the elevations were excellent and showed that a great deal of careful study had gone into the presentation.

The Commission approved this plan and hoped that it can set an example in the quality of its design for all future schools in the city of Washington.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Brigadier General C. M. Duke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington, D.C. 20004

EXHIBIT F

1 cop

3 November 1965

Dear General Duke:

At its meeting on October 20th, the Commission of Fine Arts considered the preliminary design for an elementary school at Texas Avenue and Burns Street, S.E.

The Commission felt that the building was not well related to the site and also lacked an appropriate architectural expression. The site is obviously very difficult, with its steep slopes and heavily wooded areas in the northwest corner. Nevertheless, the Commission feels that within the existing conditions a much better design could be evolved. We suggested arranging the principal masses of the building parallel to Burns Street and eliminating the cantilevered kindergarten wing on the west elevation. We also feel there should be a much greater effort made toward simplifying and strengthening the architectural character of the facades. There seemed to be very little effort along these lines, as evidenced by the drawings. We recommend a complete restudy of the project.

The Commission understands there is a possibility that another site might be selected. If this is so, we will gladly add our endorsement.

Our next meeting is scheduled for November 16 and 17.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Brigadier General C. M. Duke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington, D.C. 20004

EXHIBIT G

2 November 1965

Dear General Duke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on October 20th, considered preliminary designs for the Emery Elementary School replacement on Lincoln Road and S Street, N.E.

The principal difficulty in this plan is the obviously inadequate site. However, it is our understanding that there is little hope that any additional land can be obtained. Within these limitations the architect has prepared a plan that is generally acceptable. Beyond this, there appeared to be little effort at arriving at a suitable architectural solution. Despite the limitations of the site a much better design could be developed. There was no recognition of structure, materials were poorly used, and there seemed to be little awareness of the value of proportion and other elements essential to good architecture. In brief, the design was tired, overworked, and inadequate.

We strongly recommend that the architects make a conscientious effort in their restudy of this project.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Brigadier General C. M. Duke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT H

2 November 1965

Dear Mr. Purcell:

This will confirm our informal discussion on the Senior High School at 55th and Eads Street, N.W.

The idea of a high rise school in the city of Washington is an appealing and challenging concept, and the Commission would support any efforts of the Department of Buildings and Grounds to promote this idea with the Board of Education.

As to the particular site and design of this school, we would like to meet with the architect on November 17 and discuss some of the details of the rearrangement of masses, etc. There are obviously many problems associated with this project and we feel that a discussion with the architects would be a more fruitful way of arriving at a solution.

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Mr. G. A. Purcell
Liaison Officer
D.C. Department of Buildings
and Grounds
Room 3148 Municipal Center
300 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

EXHIBIT 1

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 October 1965

AM
9:30 I. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

II. INTERVIEWS

9:35 1. Department of the Navy

a. Bolling/Anacostia Dining Hall & Squadron Headquarters Building - Material Samples

(Mr. Vincent Kling, architect; Captain Enger, Lt. Kirkwood, Area Public Works Office)

b. Chemistry Laboratory Building, Naval Research Laboratory - Revised Design

(Captain Enger, Lt. Kirkwood; representatives of Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, architects)

10:15 2. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Fort Myer, Virginia, NCO Open Mess - Revised Design

(Colonel F.B. Proctor and representatives of Corps of Engrs)

10:45 3. Smithsonian Institution

National Zoological Park, Hospital and Research Building - Service Area - Revised Design

11:00 4. District of Columbia Government, Department of Buildings and Grounds

a. Engine Co. No. 15, 14th & V Sts., S.E. - Proposed Design

(Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, D.C. Dept. of Bldgs. & Gds.; Mr. Clark Harmon, architect)

b. Elementary School, Texas Ave. & Burns St., S.E. - Proposed Design

(Mr. Purcell; representative of Lower, Sergeant & Assoc)

c. Elementary School, 11th & Kenyon Sts., N.W. - Proposed Design

(Mr. Purcell; representative of Lyle, Carlisle & Wolff)

d. Emery Elementary School Replacement, Lincoln Road and S St., N.W. - Proposed Design

(Mr. Purcell; Mr. Ronald Senseman , architect)

e. Senior High School, 55th & Eads St., N.W. - Informal Discussion

(Mr. Purcell; representative of Lyle, Carlisle & Wolff)

d. Emery Elementary School Replacement, Lincoln Road and S St., N.W. - Proposed Design

(Mr. Purcell; Mr. Ronald Sanderman, architect)

e. Senior High School, 55th & Eads St., N.W. - Informal Discussion